

REMARKS

This Amendment is responsive to the Final Office Action dated April 8, 2009. Applicants would like to thank Examiner O'Hern for the analysis contained in the Office Action dated October 1, 2008, and for withdrawing the objections in the previous Office Action.

Claim Rejection under 35 U.S.C. 103

Claims 1 – 10 currently stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kent (U.S. patent no. 5,924,694) in view of Crook (U.S. patent no. 5,482,754).

The Applicant has amended claim 1 to refer to first and second rigidifying grids that are spaced between the top and bottom faces. This feature is shown in FIG. 2 of the drawings, and described at page 5, lines 3 – 5.

The claimed rubber access mat is designed to conform to uneven ground and support a large weight, such as the weight of a vehicle. The mat experiences shear forces when placed on uneven ground, and bending moments when a point load is applied, such as when a vehicle tire passes over a mat. It is desirable to allow the mat to deform in response to shear forces, as this allows it to conform to an uneven surface. It is undesirable to allow the mat to deform in response to bending moments, as this results in the mat curling up under the weight of the tires. Generally, a stronger wire will reduce both deflections, such that using a single rigidifying grid results in a tradeoff between the two. It has been found that using two grids spaced between the top and bottom surfaces allows a user to avoid this tradeoff by reducing bending deflections while still allowing shear deflections.

Kent teaches away from this, as a necessary characteristic of Kent is to permit bending. Crook also does not teach this, as Crook teaches wire rope threaded in a single direction through strips of rubber tires. The Applicant therefore submits that claim 1 is patentable over Kent in view

of Crook. As claims 2 through 10 depend directly or indirectly on claim 1, the Applicant submits that these claims are also patentable.

In view of the foregoing amendments and arguments, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is now in a condition for allowance. The Applicant, therefore, requests the early issue of a Notice of Allowance.

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CONCLUSION

Claims 1-10 are all in patentable condition. Allowance of the application at an early date is requested. Should any remaining issues need resolution prior to allowance, the Examiner is invited to directly contact the undersigned counsel to discuss these issues.

Respectfully submitted,

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kevan L. Morgan", is written over the printed name.

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